

Cartoons are Not Just for Fun

Lesson plan author: Bobbie Mason, Mt. Vernon Elementary

Intended grade level: 5th

Number of students: varies

Major content: U.S. History

Unit: Current events

Lesson length: Two 50-minute class periods

Context

The use of political/editorial cartoons will help students shed their “presentism” and use the skills that they have developed in order to think critically. Students will use inquiry strategies in order to enhance their own curiosity and gain a better knowledge of difficult or controversial materials. Students make decisions based on how they are influenced by what they hear, read, and see in various forms of media around them.

Thoughts Prior to Lesson

The use of political cartoons is a way for students to become actively engaged learners and develop visual literacy skills. When analyzing these documents students will identify different methods of persuasion used to convey meaning, point of view, themes. Students will also exercise critical thinking skills.

This lesson is meant to be conducted with students who have had prior experience with analyzing visual images. It is recommended to use visual analysis strategies.

Most upper elementary students do not have a lot of experience with analyzing political/editorial cartoons. This lesson should be completed in a structured environment with the use of modeling and guided practice.

Standards

SS-05-5.1.1

Students will use a variety of primary and secondary sources (e.g. artifacts, diaries, maps, timelines) to describe significant events in the history of the U.S. and interpret different perspectives. DOK3

SS-05-5.2.1

Students will identify historical documents, selected readings and speeches and explain their historical significance. DOK3

5 – P3.1.2

Use graphic data and other sources to analyze information about a contemporary public issue related to the United States Constitution and evaluate alternative resolutions.

CCSS ELA –LITERACY-RI.5.3

Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text.

Student Learning Target/ I Can Statement

- Student Learning Target: I CAN USE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES TO DESCRIBE EVENTS AND INTERPRET PERSPECTIVES IN HISTORY
- Student Learning Target: I CAN EXPLAIN THE POINT OF VIEW IN A HISTORICAL TEXT BASED ON THE SPECIFIC INFORMATION IN THE TEXT

- Student Learning Target: I CAN USE MULTIPLE SOURCES AND APPROPRIATE, COMMUNICATION TOOLS TO LOCATE, INVESTIGATE, ORGANIZE AND COMMUNICATE INFORMATION ON A PUBLIC ISSUE.

Resources, Media and Technology

Large paper
Markers
Editorial Cartoons
Cartoon Analysis Sheets
Blank Paper

Instructions

Introduction to political/editorial cartoons: Editorial cartoons use simple pictures and text to make a point about a current event of the time under study. These cartoons use images of easily recognizable things, places or people in order to get their message across or to persuade individuals to take action.

When you are trying to interpret any editorial/political cartoon, students should try to look at the big picture that is being identified. Have students look at the picture. Tell them to first, take a look at the images and text in the cartoon, and describe what you see. Is there anything that looks familiar? Then have students think about what time period the image may be. What in the image could give you clues to what the time and what is going on? What is the artist of the cartoon trying to tell you?

Day 1

Ask students to think about symbols. Give students blank paper or whiteboards. Have them to draw symbols that they are familiar with. Have them switch with a partner and see if they can identify the meaning behind the symbols that they drew. (Some examples: The Pepsi red, white and blue circle, Golden arches of McDonalds, Nike Swoosh, and Chevrolet bow tie)

Discuss the activity with the students How did the pictures convey meanings and messages? Which is more powerful; words or images?

Introduce students to the words symbolism, exaggeration, labeling, analogy and irony. Use several large pieces of poster paper. Label each poster with the terms. Have students work in small groups to brainstorm ideas about what each term means. If students become stuck, help by using the following guided questions:

Symbolism: What is symbolism? What is the root word of symbolism? What is the symbol of the United States? What other examples of symbols can you think of? What does each of those symbols represent?

Exaggeration: What does it mean to exaggerate? Give an example of a time you exaggerated the truth. In a cartoon, what kinds of things are usually exaggerated? Why do we exaggerate things?

Labeling: What is the purpose of a label? Give some examples of labels. What purpose would a label serve in a cartoon drawing?

Analogy: What is an analogy? Give students an analogy such as; a glove is to hand as a sock is to foot or paint is to canvas as pencil is to journal. How would drawing or writing an analogy in a political cartoon support the artist's message or point of view?

Irony: Explain to the students that irony is a kind of a surprise. It is the difference between what is expected to happen, and what actually does happen. Irony is like a glitch, a twist, or a last minute switch in the game. It is an interruption of events that cause an unexpected outcome.

(50 minutes)

Day 2

- Explain to students that today they will be analyzing editorial cartoons. Show the students the image, “Study Habits.” Go through the steps to analyze the cartoon with the students. This will serve as a guided practice activity. The students should hear you “think” out loud as you work through the cartoon. Then demonstrate how to fill out the analysis form. (20 minutes)
- Once the students are confident of their abilities, divide class into groups of 3-5 students. Give each group the cartoons. Each group should also be given the “Cartoon Analysis” sheet. Give each student the handout “Examples of symbols used in political cartoons.” The student groups should then be given time to analyze their cartoon. As students work, the teacher should monitor the groups’ discussions and interject suggestions if they group is having difficulties. (25 minutes)
- Each group should then present their finished analysis to the class. Groups should be cautioned to be able to support their position based on evidence found within the cartoon. As the groups are presenting, the rest of the class should be encouraged to take notes on the presentations and reflect on these in writing, such as their journals. These writings should compare explore the common themes and persuasive strategies as well as effectiveness of the cartoon. (15-20 minutes)
- Accommodations for IEP: Based on Individual plan for Student

Suggestions

- Scaffold student learning with simplified examples of political cartoons. Give students only one cartoon to analyze at a time.
- Ask students to focus on analyzing the more basic persuasive techniques of symbolism, exaggeration, and labeling. Give additional, guided support to help students with analogy and irony.

Gifted and Talented Suggestions

- Encourage students to work independently on their Political Cartoon Analysis Charts.
- Ask students to locate a series of political cartoons that share a common theme. Have them identify the theme and conduct a full comparative analysis of the cartoons using the analysis chart. Have them develop a presentation of their work to share with the class.
- Give students the opportunity to research a topic of their choosing and develop a series of political cartoons representing different points of view. Ask students to write a summary of their work that explains their design choices according the elements of persuasion.

Assessment Plan

In tabular format, organize how objectives will be assessed. Include copies of assessment instruments and rubrics (if applicable).

Objective/Assessment Organizer

Objective Number	Type of Assessment	Description of Assessment	Adaptations/ Accommodations
Objective 1	Formative	Document/Image Analysis Answers to questions	Extra time for students with IEP's/504's-Other accommodations will be implemented based on individual plan-*specific per school/school system
Objective 2	Summative	Journal entry comparing two cartoons. Entries should explore the common themes and persuasive strategies as well as effectiveness of the cartoon.	Extra time for students with IEP's/504's-Other accommodations will be implemented based on individual plan-*specific per school/school system

Impact

- This lesson is designed to have students critically think about primary sources. It is also designed to demonstrate how to integrate tiered assignments into regular classroom instruction. Students will increase skills and knowledge of using primary source documents that are both visual and text in form. In doing so, the student will increase critical thinking skills both individually and as a group member. Students will also be given opportunities to work in collaborative groups that will encourage them to be active participants. These activities are learner driven and focused on process.

Refinement / Lesson Extension

- Teacher will make adjustments as needed for implementation, based on the reflection. This lesson could be extended into the areas of Liberty, citizenship and Civic Responsibilities.

Examples of Symbols Used in Political Cartoons

Concept	Symbols
Peace	dove, olive branch, victory sign
United States	Uncle Sam, flag, stars and stripes, shield, Columbia
Democrats / Democratic Party	donkey, sometimes rooster
Republicans / Republican party	elephant
Death	vulture, skeleton with shroud, skull and crossbones, grim reaper
Love	heart, Cupid, Venus
Money	dollar bill or dollar sign

Cartoonists use five main elements to convey their point of view:

Symbolism: Using an object to stand for an idea

Captioning and Labels: Used for clarity and emphasis

Analogy: A comparison between two unlike things that share some characteristics

Irony: The difference between the way things are and the way things should be or the way things are expected to be

Exaggeration: Overstating or magnifying a problem or a physical feature or habit: big nose, bushy eyebrows, large ears, baldness

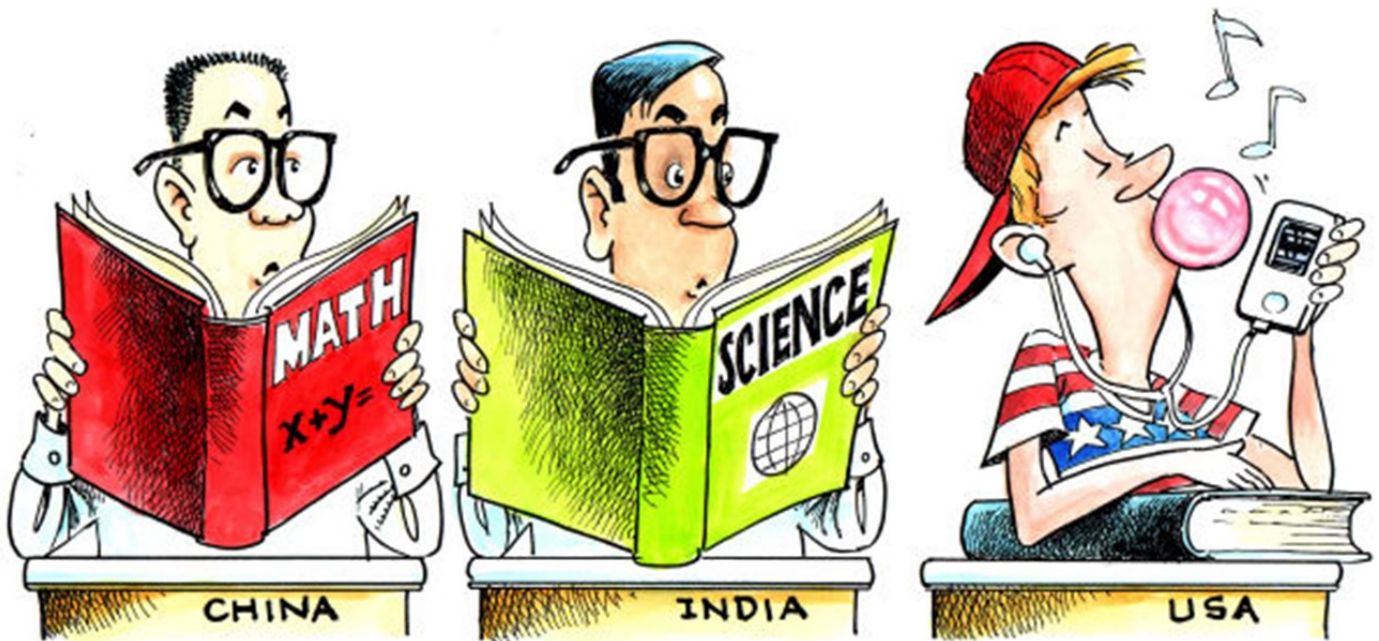
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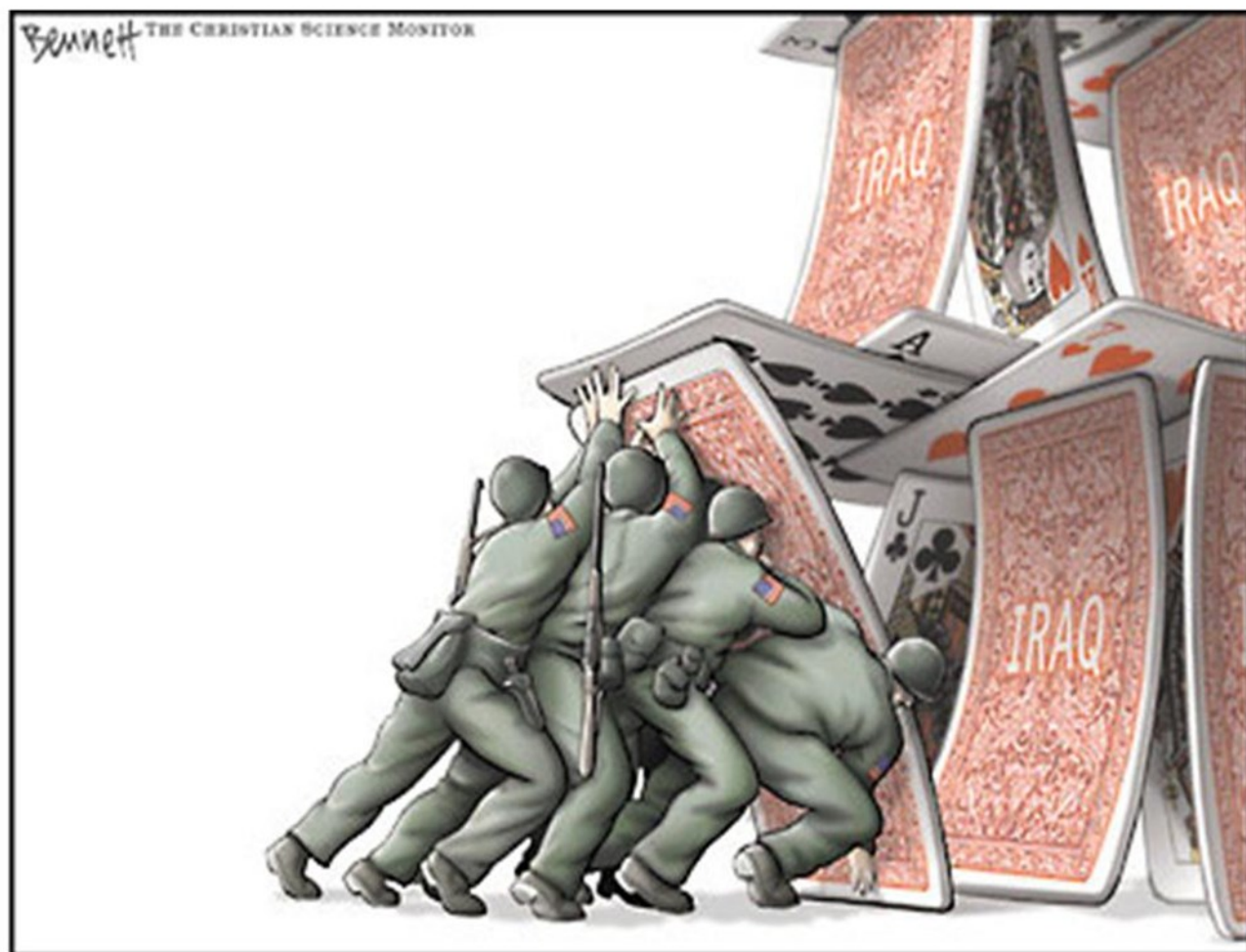


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Study habits...



DAVE GRANLUND © www.davegranlund.com





Garry Shandling
THE HONOLULU STAR
© 2005 CREATOR: 7/12









Visuals	Words (not all cartoons include words)
<p>1. List the objects or people you see in the cartoon.</p> <div style="background-color: #e6f2ff; height: 200px; width: 100%;"></div>	<p>1. Identify the cartoon caption and/or title.</p> <div style="background-color: #e6f2ff; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div> <p>2. Locate three words or phrases used by the cartoonist to identify objects or people within the cartoon.</p> <div style="background-color: #e6f2ff; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div> <p>3. Record any important dates or numbers that appear in the cartoon.</p> <div style="background-color: #e6f2ff; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div>
Level 2	
Visuals	Words
<p>2. Which of the objects on your list are symbols?</p> <div style="background-color: #e6f2ff; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div> <p>3. What do you think each symbol means?</p> <div style="background-color: #e6f2ff; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div>	<p>4. Which words or phrases in the cartoon appear to be the most significant? Why do you think so?</p> <div style="background-color: #e6f2ff; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div> <p>5. List adjectives that describe the emotions portrayed in the cartoon.</p> <div style="background-color: #e6f2ff; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div>
Level 3	
<p>A. Describe the action taking place in the cartoon.</p> <div style="background-color: #e6f2ff; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div> <p>B. Explain how the words in the cartoon clarify the symbols.</p> <div style="background-color: #e6f2ff; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div> <p>C. Explain the message of the cartoon.</p> <div style="background-color: #e6f2ff; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div> <p>D. What special interest groups would agree/disagree with the cartoon's message? Why?</p> <div style="background-color: #e6f2ff; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div>	

Limit response for each question to 3 lines of text